

BUILDING-STRUCTURE INVENTORY FORM

NYS OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION
& HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DIVISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
(518)237-8643

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

UNIQUE SITE NO. _____
QUAD. _____
SERIES _____
NEG.NO. _____

YOUR NAME: Kathy Howe DATE: Nov. 1994

YOUR ADDRESS: 133 South Fitzhugh Street TELEPHONE: (716)546-7029
Rochester, NY 14608

ORGANIZATION (if any): The Landmark Society of Western New York, Inc.

* * * * *

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME(S): "Elm Tree Farm," Yates-Thayer House
2. COUNTY: Monroe TOWN: Greece
3. STREET LOCATION: 710 Latta Road
4. OWNERSHIP: a. public [] b. private [X]
5. PRESENT OWNER: Joseph Coco & Patsy ADDRESS: 252 Edgemere Drive
Fragnito Rochester, NY 14612
6. USE: Original: residence/farm Present: vacant
7. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC: Exterior visible from public road: Yes[X] No[]
Interior accessible: Explain private property/boarded up

DESCRIPTION

8. BUILDING MATERIAL: a. clapboard [X] b. stone [] c. brick [X](fdn.) d. board and batten []
e. cobblestone [] f. shingles [] g. stucco [] other: Asphalt roof shingles.
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: a. wood frame with interlocking joints []
(if known) b. wood frame with light members [X]
c. masonry load bearing walls []
d. metal (explain) _____
e. other _____
10. CONDITION: a. excellent [] b. good [] c. fair [] d. deteriorated [X]
11. INTEGRITY: a. original site [X] b. moved [] if so, when? _____
c. list major alterations and dates (if known): _____
(see continuation sheet)

12. PHOTO:

13. MAP:

"There's some nice architectural detail here, such as the Corinthian capitals. It's kind of derelict, so it's hard to assess it in its present condition. With the barn on the site, it puts it in a higher consideration, as it's a complex. It's certainly in the 'red' category. The barn is great - a really nice complex - a 'red minus' for its lamentable condition." P.Malo.

COLOR CODE

Red minus



14. THREATS TO BUILDING:

- a. none known [] b. zoning [] c. roads []
d. developers [] e. deterioration [X]
f. other: The property was condemned by the Town of Greece due to code violations.

15. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY:

- a. barn [X] b. carriage house [] c. garage []
d. privy [] e. shed [] f. greenhouse []
g. shop [] h. gardens []
i. landscape features: Curved stone walls at driveway entrance.
j. other: Small tenant house behind the main house.

16. SURROUNDINGS OF THE BUILDING (check more than one if necessary):

- a. open land [X] b. woodland []
c. scattered buildings [X]
d. densely built-up [X](neighborhood) e. commercial []
f. industrial [] g. residential [X]
h. other: _____

17. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS:

(Indicate if building or structure is in an historic district)

(see continuation sheet)

18. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING AND SITE (including interior features if known):

(see continuation sheet)

SIGNIFICANCE

19. DATE OF INITIAL CONSTRUCTION: c. 1902

ARCHITECT: not determined

BUILDER: not determined

20. HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

(see continuation sheet)

21. SOURCES:

(see continuation sheet)

22. THEME: Agricultural: Farmhouse and outbuildings.

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11c.

House - south elevation: Windows and doors boarded up with plywood at first floor. Pilasters at corners clad in aluminum.

House - east elevation: First floor windows boarded up with plywood. Two of the Doric columns are covered with aluminum and one has fallen over. Pilasters at the corners of the bay are also clad in aluminum. Exposed rafter tails at the porch are deteriorated and many are missing. Hood over side door has been altered.

House - north elevation: Window boarded up with plywood at first floor. The other first floor window is a smaller, one-over-one, double-hung replacement sash. Paired attic windows are one-over-one, double-hung replacement sash.

House - west elevation: Most of the first floor windows are boarded up with plywood. The corner columns at the porte cochere are covered with aluminum as are the pilasters.

House - interior: The house was recently divided into apartments but was condemned due to code violations and is now vacant.

Barn - south elevation: Two modern replacement doors. Arched opening in center of loft has new replacement windows in lower part.

Barn - east elevation: New windows and doors. Many boarded up with plywood.

Barn - north elevation: Some new windows and doors. Exterior frame stair added.

Barn - west elevation: New windows and doors. Many boarded up with plywood.

Barn - interior: Like the house, the barn was converted into apartments but was condemned due to code violations and is now vacant.

Tenant house: Most of the door and window openings at this building have been boarded up with plywood.

17. This early-twentieth-century house is located on a 2.7 acre lot on the north side of Latta Road in the northeast quadrant of the town. The house sits well back from the road with a driveway to the west. The entrance to the driveway features curved, rock-faced stone walls on either side with a metal gate. A contributing early-twentieth-century, Bungalow style cottage is located north of the house. Northwest of the house is a contributing early-twentieth-century, gambrel-roofed barn. An open field is on the west side of the property. The surrounding neighborhood includes early- to mid-twentieth-century houses on Latta Road. A post World War II residential development on Dohrcrest Drive (west of Greenleaf Road) with ranch and split level houses borders this property to the east.

18. Two and one-half story, cross-gabled, Neo-classical style frame house. The house is built atop a foundation of buff-colored brick. The exterior walls are clad with wood clapboard. Fenestration consists primarily of six-over-one, double-hung, wood sash; most of the first floor windows are boarded up with plywood. The house is notable for its lavish classical design and ornamentation which includes a monumental, curved front portico, Corinthian and Doric order pilasters and columns, an entablature with a Greek key motif in the cornice, and pedimented gable ends. It is interesting to note that while the east porch and the west porte cochere feature Neo-classical Doric columns they also have exposed rafter tails projecting from their roofs which is Craftsman in style.

The curved portico projects from the front-gabled, south elevation. This flat-roofed porch features Corinthian order columns and pilasters, and a spindled balustrade at the second floor. An entablature wraps around the upper curve of this porch. Pairs of French doors open out onto the second floor of the porch. The porch flooring at the first floor is clay tile.

The east elevation features a projecting cross-gabled bay with a one-story, square-plan porch. This flat-roofed porch has Doric order columns at the corners and clay tile flooring. Three pairs of French doors open out onto this porch. A side entrance is located north of this porch. This door has sidelights and a covered transom above with a replacement hood. Two gabled dormers with six-over-one, double-hung wood sash and paneled Doric pilasters project from the east side of the roof.

18. continued

The entrance at the rear, north, elevation features a pedimented, gable-roofed hood supported by wood brackets.

A flat-roofed porte-cochere is located near the center of the west elevation. This is supported by Doric order columns. The entrance beneath the porte-cochere has sidelights. A rectangular bay with decorative brackets extends over this entrance. Of special note above the porte-cochere on the second floor is a curved bay with Doric pilasters, six-over-one, double-hung end windows, and an eight-over-one, double-hung center window. The corners of the cross-gabled bay on the west elevation feature full-height Corinthian order pilasters. A gabled roof dormer and a chimney are on the west side of the roof.

The entrance to the property on Latta Road is marked by curved, rock-faced stone walls on either side of the driveway.

The large gambrel-roofed, rectangular plan barn is constructed atop a concrete foundation. This frame structure is clad in novelty siding. While the barn recently underwent a significant number of alterations when it was converted into apartments, its basic form and some of the original details remain. Rising above the roof ridge are two, cross-gabled, frame cupolas with corner pilasters and round-arched, louvered openings. Two shed-roofed dormers, clad in wood shingles project from both the east and west sides of the roof. Both the north and south elevations of the barn feature a round-arched opening in the center of the loft. The arch on the south elevation retains the original wooden drip molding.

The one and one-half story, frame, Bungalow cottage is square in plan with a hipped roof. The eaves are ornamented with curved brackets. This frame structure is clad with wood shingles. A hipped-roof dormer projects from the south side of the roof. A bay window projects from the west elevation.

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20. Built c. 1902, this house is architecturally significant in the town of Greece as an outstanding example of Neo-classical style architecture. Elm Tree Farm, as it was originally known, is historically significant for its association with the Arthur G. Yates family, owners of the Yates Coal Company, the Rochester-Pittsburgh Coal Company, and the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad. The property, which includes a large gambrel barn and a tenant house, is also important as a visual reminder of Greece's agricultural heritage.

Historic photographs (see attached) from the collection of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse show views of the house not long after it was built. One of the photos shows several workers planting bushes, while the other shows a man in a horse-drawn carriage. Another photo shows a view of the barn while under construction.

The exterior of the house retains a high degree of integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship though its current deteriorated state poses a threat to the building's future.

The house exhibits the identifying characteristics of the Neo-classical style including a facade dominated by a full-height portico and the application of sophisticated, carved wood ornament including an entablature, a Greek key motif, Corinthian and Doric order columns and pilasters, and pedimented gable ends. Typical of the Neo-classical style, the windows are rectangular, double-hung sash with multiple panes in the upper sash and a single-pane lower sash.

While the Neo-classical was a dominant style for public and institutional buildings during the first quarter of the twentieth century, it was not as commonly used for private residences as was the closely related Colonial Revival style. The profusion of carved ornament and the relatively grand scale made it a popular style of the affluent.

The revival of interest in classical-inspired architecture can be traced to the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. A classical theme was chosen for the exposition's buildings. Many of the country's most renowned architects were commissioned to design the impressive colonnaded buildings of the fair which were arranged around a central court. The exposition received widespread exposure throughout the country thanks to newspaper and magazine articles.

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The survival of the outbuildings at Elm Tree Farm contributes to the integrity of the setting. Agricultural structures are quickly vanishing from the town's landscape, victims of development, deterioration, abandonment, or fire. Surviving barns such as this one at Elm Tree Farm are becoming more rare and thus are considered highly significant historic resources.

Despite alterations, the barn survives as an impressive example of an early-twentieth-century agricultural structure. By the late 1800s, gambrel-roofed barns became the dominant barn type on most farms. The gambrel roof provided greater storage space and accommodated larger hay crops and farm machinery. Significant features found on this barn include the large round-arched loft openings; louvered, cross-gabled cupolas; and shingled shed dormers.

The small Bungalow style tenant house retains the original massing and materials. Of special note is the roof overhang with decorative wood brackets.

The land on which the house and outbuildings is located was once owned by the Fleming family. The 1902 county map shows Joseph Fleming owning 73 acres of land with a building on it on lot 18 on the north side of Latta Road with Patrick Fleming owning 134 acres in lot 17 directly to the north.

In 1902 the land was conveyed to Harry Yates (son of Arthur G. Yates) and his wife, Mary Duffy Yates. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Yates lived in Buffalo. The Latta Road house is believed to have been built about 1902. According to Virginia Tomkiewicz, Greece Town Historian, the house may have been used as a country home or a summer home by the Yates family. It does not appear to have

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been a permanent year-round residence for the Yates.³ Deeds indicate that the property was in the name of Harry Yates, although Historian Bill Davis believes that it was the father, Arthur G. Yates, who built the house. Mr. Davis also noted that this country estate once had a deer farm, an ice pond, and impressive gardens.

Arthur G. Yates was born on December 18, 1843 in East Waverly, New York. He married Virginia L. Holden on December 26, 1867. He and his wife had six children; four of whom survived to adulthood: Frederick W., Harry G., Florence, and Russell P. Yates established the Yates Coal Company in Rochester. The following advertisement for the company appeared in the 1902 city directory:

The Yates Coal Company
Wholesale and Retail Dealers and Shippers
Anthracite and Bituminous Coal
Walston Crushed Coke for Domestic Purposes
General office - Elwood Building, Rochester
Shipping docks - Charlotte Street
Yards - 53 Hill Street, 77 Canal Street,
68 West Avenue.⁴

³The Yates' names are not listed at the Latta Road house on either the 1900 or 1910 Federal Census or on any maps or directories. The 1902 city directory shows Mr. and Mrs. Arthur G. Yates' permanent address at 120 South Fitzhugh Street (demolished) in Rochester's Third Ward. One of the Yates' other sons, Frederick W. and his wife, lived nearby at 136 South Fitzhugh Street (demolished). Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Yates later moved to a house at 1040 East Avenue. Their East Avenue house was torn down (1944) to make way for Asbury First Methodist Church. In addition to these properties, historian Bill Davis has noted that the Yates family also had an English Tudor style house, with tenant houses, which still stands on Lake Avenue. This property originally extended from Lake Avenue to the shore of the Genesee River where the Yates' railroad line and coal loading trestle were located.

⁴*The Rochester House Directory, 1902.* (Rochester: Drew Allis Co., 1901-02) p. 790.

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Yates was considered one of the leading coal traders in the northeast. In addition to founding the Yates Coal Company, he was also associated with the Rochester and Pittsburgh Coal Company. Yates built large shipping docks at the Port of Rochester, in Charlotte. He was also a member of the firm of Bell, Lewis and Yates, which mined and shipped bituminous coal from Pennsylvania. Yates later bought out this firm and acquired the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad since much of his coal was shipped on this line. He served as president of the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad beginning in 1890. Yates was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Genesee Valley Club, the Ellicott Square Club of Buffalo, the Duquesne Club of Pittsburgh, the City Mid-Day Club and the Transportation Club of New York. Yates died on February 9, 1909.

Information about his son, Harry Yates, is given in the following obituary which appeared in the *Times-Union* on February 1, 1956:

ORCHARD PARK - Harry Yates, 86, Buffalo financier who was born in Rochester, died at his home here today (Feb. 11, 1956).

Mr. Yates was a director of Rochester-Pittsburgh Coal Co.

He was the son of A.G. Yates who operated a coal business in Rochester for many years. Harry Yates married the former Mary Duffy here in 1892 and they moved to Buffalo.

Mr. Yates was chairman of the board of the Lafayette Hotel in Buffalo and also of the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority (Peace Bridge). He was a director of the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railway, American Steamship Co. and the Liberty Bank of Buffalo. He was a large stockholder in the Commodore Hotel in New York City....⁵

⁵"Harry Yates Dies at 86; City-Born Financier," *Times-Union* (1 February 1956).

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In addition to the business endeavors listed above, Harry Yates had a cattle farm in Orchard Park which was left to his son Robert.

Mary Duffy Yates died October 7, 1956. She was the daughter of Walter B. Duffy and Teresa O'Dea Duffy of Rochester. Her father was a city parks commissioner and financed the construction of the Duffy-Powers Building (which later became the Navy Ordnance Division of Eastman Kodak Co.).⁶

On July 16, 1914, Harry Yates sold Elm Tree Farm (Liber 941 of deeds, p. 292) to Samuel G. Thayer of 1286 East Avenue, Rochester. The 1920 Federal Census lists Samuel G. Thayer as the owner of a "general farm" on Latta Road. The 1924 county map shows Thayer owning four parcels at the northwest corner of Latta Road and North Street. The New York Central Railroad tracks bisected his property in the center with a total of 141 acres to the south of the tracks along Latta Road, and 90 acres north of the tracks. The 1924 map also shows what appears to be two houses and three outbuildings on Thayer's property.

Samuel Thayer died on February 20, 1956. His obituary in the *Times-Union*, February 21, 1956, provides the following information about his life:

Samuel G. Thayer, farmer and member of the Greece Planning board for many years, died unexpectedly yesterday (February 20, 1956) in his home, Elm Tree Farm, 710 Latta Road.

A native of Lima, Mr. Thayer was the son of George Wood Thayer, who was the first president of the Lincoln-Alliance Bank; now the Lincoln Rochester Trust Co.

After graduating from Cornell University, Samuel Thayer took a trip around the world, stopping at The Hague to visit his uncle, Samuel Richard Thayer, United States minister to The Netherlands. He also

⁶"Mrs. Yates Rite Tomorrow, City Financier's Widow," *Democrat and Chronicle* (9 October 1956).

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visited his cousin, Rufus Hildreth Thayer, who was serving as a U.S. judge in Shanghai.

Mr. Thayer at one time worked for the Waterbury Brass Co., Waterbury Conn., and as a surveyor for the United States government. He bought the farm in Latta road in 1914.

He was a member of the New York State Horticultural Society, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Cornell Club of Rochester, the Rochester Ad Club, the University Club, the Chamber of Commerce and Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity. He was a former member of the Genesee Valley Club.

Surviving are his wife, Ruth; a son, Samuel G. Thayer Jr; a daughter, Mrs. W. Raymond Ferris of Waterloo; a sister, Mrs. Campbell Baird of Rochester, and one niece, Mrs. Edward Hills Lee....

Another article in the *Times-Union*, January 16, 1959, discussed Thayer's Estate which was valued at \$476,000. The article noted that Thayer's "real estate, consisting of 168 acres at Latta and Greenleaf roads, Greece, was valued at \$275,619."⁸

In 1958, the estate of Samuel Thayer sold 63.10 acres to the Schantz Construction Corp. for new residential development (Liber 3161 of Deeds, p. 172). Additional land was conveyed by Samuel G. Thayer, Jr. to West Star Productions (Liber 3650 of Deeds, p. 593) and the Spoleta Construction Co. (Liber 3721 of Deeds, p. 546) in 1966. In March 1994, Samuel G. Thayer, Jr. conveyed the remaining 2.7 acre lot with the house and two outbuildings to Joseph Coco and Patsy Fragnito.

Although deteriorated, the property is highly significant both for its high style design and its association with one of Rochester's most prominent and influential families. Elm Tree Farm deserves recognition as one of the town's most important historic properties.

⁷"S.G. Thayer Dies," *Times-Union* (21 February 1956).

⁸"S.G. Thayer Estate Valued At \$476,000," *Times-Union* (16 January 1959).

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Assessment Records. Assessment Office, Town of Greece, NY.

Davis, William. Personal interview. November 1994.

Federal Census for 1910 and 1920.

"Harry Yates Dies at 86; City-Born Financier." *Times-Union*, 11 February 1956.

Historic Photographs of the Yates Estate, 1902. On file at the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse.

Map of Monroe County, N.Y. Philadelphia, PA: G.M. Hopkins, 1924.

"Mrs. Yates Rite Tomorrow, City Financier's Widow." *Democrat and Chronicle*, 9 October 1956.

Property Deeds for 710 Latta Road. Rochester, NY: Monroe County Clerk's Office.

"Robert Yates, 51, Dies; BR & P Founder's Grandson." *Times-Union*, 8 March 1961.

Rochester in History. Rochester: Wegman-Walsh Press, Inc., 1922.

The Rochester House Directory, 1902. Rochester: Drew Allis Co., 1901-02.

Rochester and Monroe County, New York, Pictorial and Biographical. New York: The Pioneer Publishing Co., 1908.

Rochester Suburban Directory of the Year 1930. Rochester, NY: Sampson & Murdock Co., 1930.

Rochester Suburban Directory for the Year 1938. Rochester, NY: Sampson & Murdock Co., 1937.

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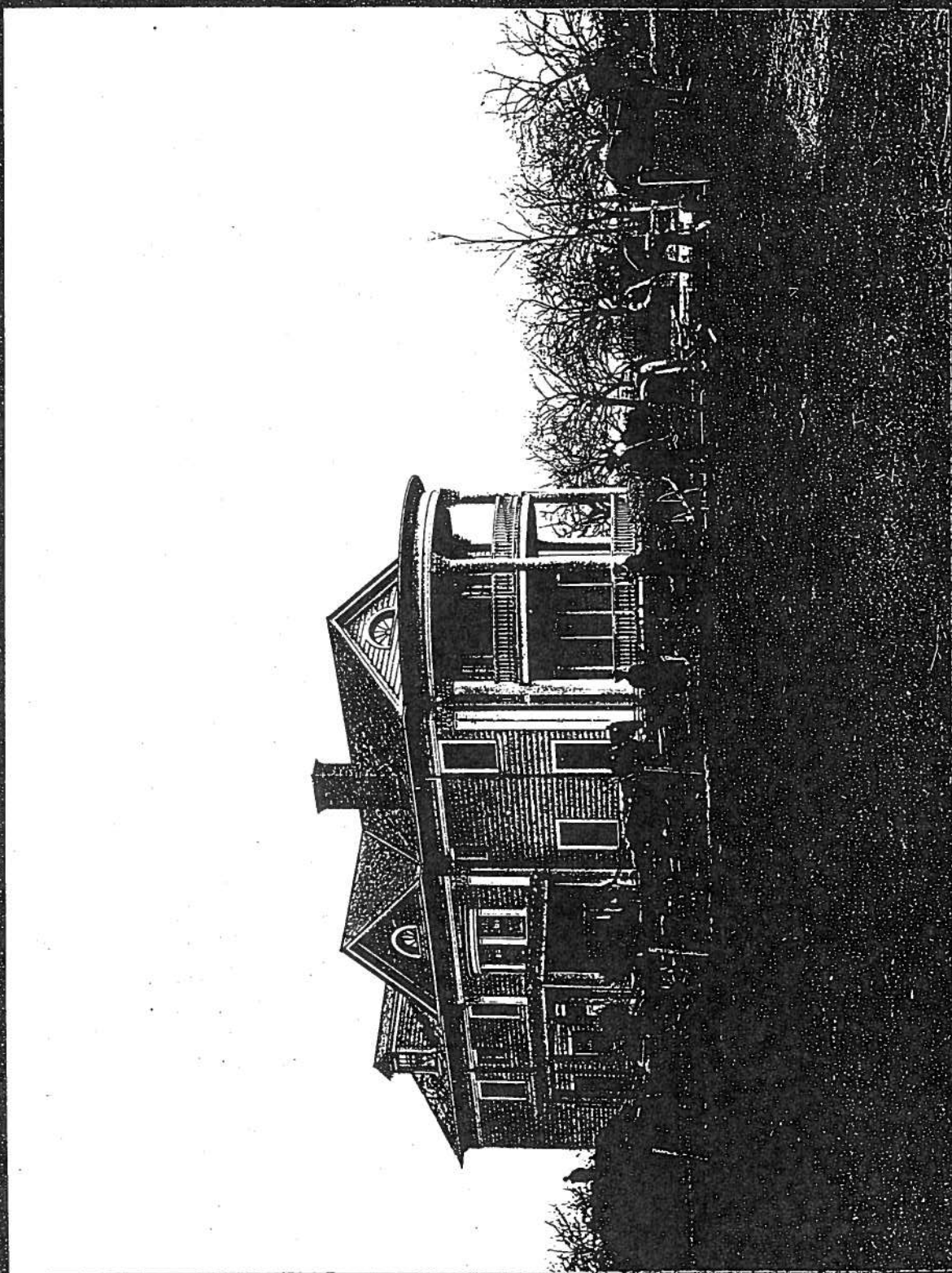
"S.G. Thayer Dies." *Times-Union*, 21 February 1956.

"S.G. Thayer Estate Valued At \$476,000." *Times-Union*, 16
January 1959.

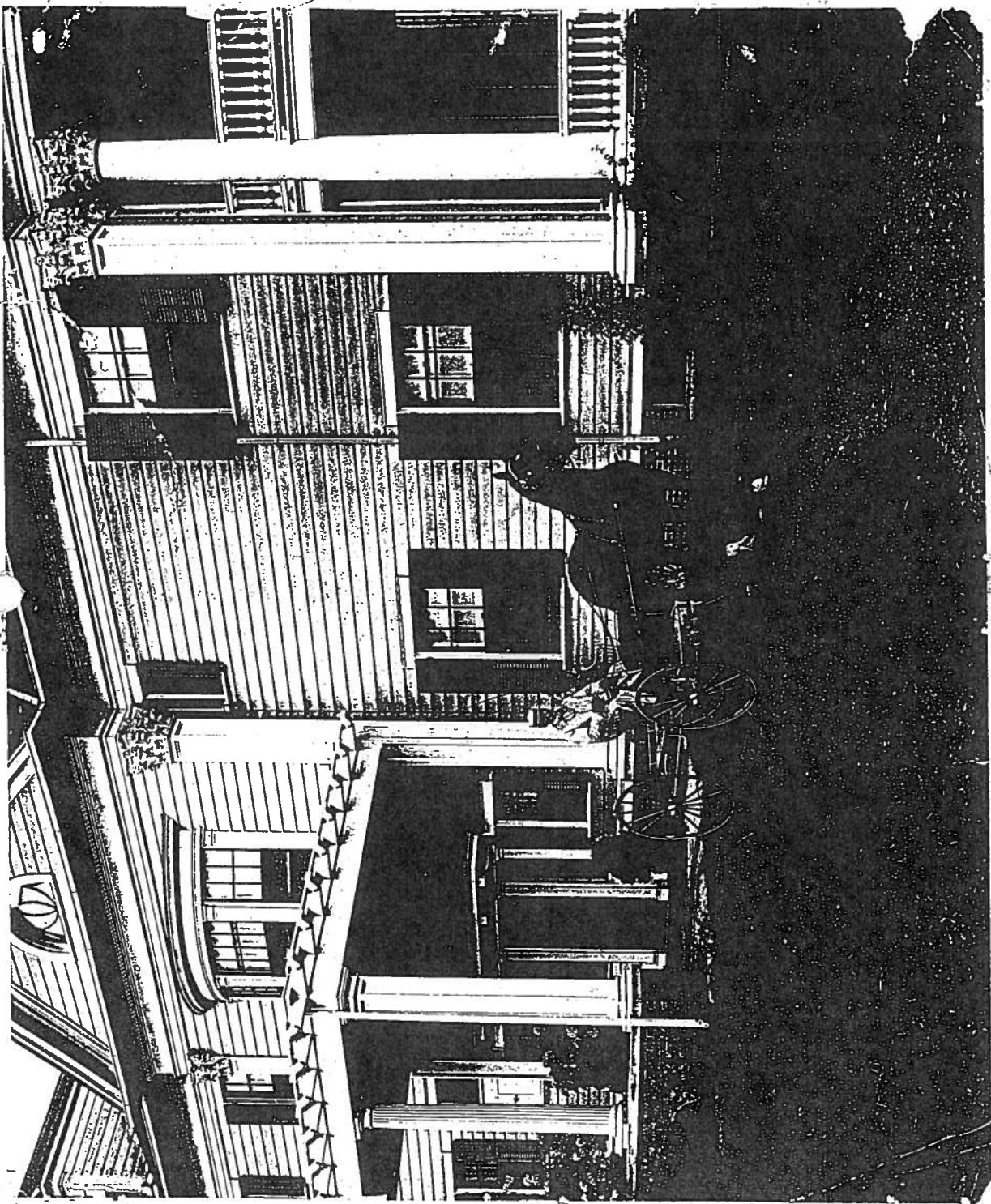
Samuel Thayer Passes; Greece Board Member." *Democrat &
Chronicle*, 21 February 1956.

Tomkiewicz, Virginia. Greece Town Historian. Personal
interview. August 1994.

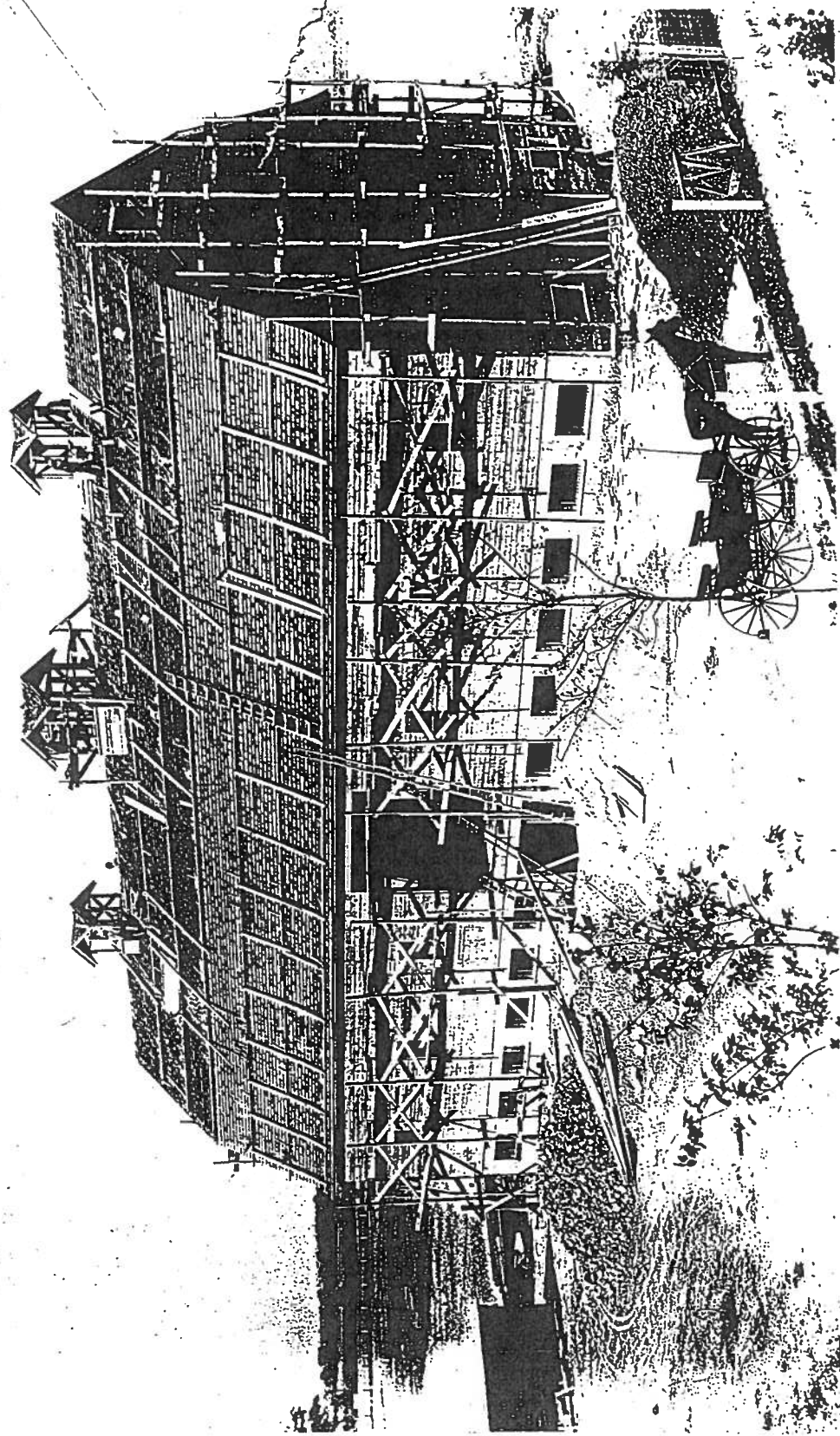
Wagner's Complete Survey of Monroe County, New York.
Cincinnati, Ohio: A.C. Wagner Co., 1928.



Elm Tree Farm, 710 Latta Road, c. 1902. (Photo courtesy of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse.)



Elm Tree Farm, 710 Latta Road, c. 1902. (Photo courtesy of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse.)



Elm Tree Farm, 710 Latta Road, c. 1902. (Photo courtesy of the Charlotte-Genesee Lighthouse.)











